

**Michael A. Freeman,  
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Psychiatry**

**A Consent Form and Patient  
Guide to Email Communication  
with Michael A. Freeman, M.D.**

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**Why use email to communicate?**

Email has a number of advantages over other types of communication. It is, convenient, and efficient. Email also works well for many of the questions, requests or messages you may have regarding prescription refill, appointment scheduling, and non-urgent medical questions.

This information and consent form will help answer some of your questions about this service. If you still have questions after reading this form, please ask them directly.

If you would like to use email to communicate with Dr. Freeman, please read and sign this

form to indicate that you understand and agree to the guidelines below.

**What should I know about email communication?**

The most important thing you should know is that it is not yet possible to guarantee the confidentiality of email exchanges. While the security of email is comparable to other types of communication (such as phone calls), there are some special issues with email:

- If your email address is through your employer, your employer may own and review all emails sent to that address. Therefore, never send personal email from your employer's computer.
- If your email address is a family address, other family members may see your messages. Confidentiality cannot be assured.
- If you use an Internet service provider, there is a risk that messages may be intercepted by others (including "hackers").
- Messages stored by your Internet service provider may be subpoenaed and obtained by government officials acting under the authority of a court order.

You should also know that others involved with this medical practice might read email you send to your doctor. Like phone calls, emails may be screened by office staff before being routed to the appropriate person.

**What types of communication are appropriate for email?**

The following types of requests or messages are appropriate for email:

- Prescription refill requests
- Appointment scheduling
- Non-urgent medical advice
- Non-urgent medical follow-up (including some types of test results)
- Non-urgent medical correspondence
- Billing/insurance questions

While many subjects are appropriate for email communication, it is ultimately you and your doctor's decision which information is appropriate for you.

**What types of communication are not appropriate for email?**

The following subjects are never appropriate for email:

- Any urgent medical problem or emergency
- Mental health issues of a confidential, crisis, or urgent nature
- Drug and alcohol problems
- HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases
- Information pertaining to situations that endanger yourself or other people
- Work-related injuries and disability
- Email communication across state lines, as Dr. Freeman is licensed to practice medicine only in California.

Please keep in mind that although email can be a very effective tool, it is not a substitute for a physical exam or counseling by your doctor.

Please do not hesitate to call the office immediately if you feel you need to see your doctor.

**How do I communicate with my doctor via email?**

To communicate with Dr. Freeman via email, simply send your email messages to *Michael.Freeman@marincounty.net*

Include one or more of the following in the SUBJECT line of your email:

- Prescription refill
- Appointment
- Non-urgent medical advice
- Non-urgent medical follow-up
- Non-urgent medical correspondence
- Billing/insurance question

This information will help us to route your email to the appropriate person.

In the body of your email, please include your *full name, phone number, and email address*, along with your message.

**What happens to an email message after it is received?**

After your message is received it is printed out and a hard copy is stored in your medical record. The electronic copy is also saved.

You can expect a response within 48 hours telling you that your message has been received and acted upon. If you do not get such an email, you should assume your email was not received. You should then call the practice with your question or request. You should not

expect to receive a response on weekends or holidays or any other time the office may be closed.

**Will I be charged for physician time spent responding to emails?**

Yes, all time spent responding to emails will be billed on a pro-rated basis, in increments of 0.1 hours (6 minutes).

**I have read this consent form and have received answers to all of my questions about using email to communicate with Michael A. Freeman, M.D.**

**I understand that any email that I send may be seen by people other than my doctor, that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed at this time, and that the Internet is not an error free network. I understand that the psychiatric practice of Dr. Michael A. Freeman does not employ encryption software or technology.**

**I understand that it is never appropriate to send e-mail from the workplace, from a computer owned by an employer, for urgent or emergency situations, for sending confidential information relating to mental health, drug and alcohol, sexually transmitted disease, or similar subjects, or for sending messages across state lines.**

**I understand that time charges will accrue for physician time spent responding to emails; and that such charges will be billed**

**on a pro-rated basis in increments of 0.1 hours (6 minutes).**

**I understand that e-mail messages may get lost, delayed, or misdirected. I agree to hold Dr. Michael A. Freeman harmless and release from any and all liability resulting from failing to receive or respond to information contained in email messages.**

**I understand the terms outlined in this brochure, and I consent to these agreements and guidelines when using email in addition to other methods of communication with Michael A. Freeman, M.D.**

**I understand that either my doctor or I may choose to discontinue the use of email communication at any time.**

**In any email communication with Michael A. Freeman, M.D., always include: Subject, Date and time of transmission, Your Full Name, Phone Number, and e-mail address**

**EMAIL IS NEVER APPROPRIATE FOR URGENT / EMERGENCY SITUATIONS**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number:(\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_